



Jenny Wilson, Salt Lake County Mayor
Robin Chalhoub, Community Services Director
James D. Cooper, Library Director

September 26, 2023

Dear Salt Lake County Library Staff,
Mayor Jenny Wilson,
Department Director Robin Chalhoub,
Library Board of Directors,
Salt Lake County Council members, and
to all the citizens of Salt Lake County

As only the fourth Salt Lake County Library Director in our history, and after almost 30 years of service filled with friendships, memories, challenges and some of the best times of my life, I have decided it is time to retire as Library Director, effective January 16, 2024.

It has been an honor and a privilege to have been a part of this amazing organization. During my career at the County Library, I am fortunate to have had the pleasure of working with more than 1,000 dedicated library co-workers, serving under 2 different forms of county government, 5 County Commissioners, 4 County Mayors, dozens of County Council members, 10 Department Directors, and more than 50 Library Board members.

I am so proud of the work that we have done to make our library system a vibrant, sustainable, and valued resource for our community. Maya Angelou once said *"Information helps you to see that you're not alone. That there's somebody in Mississippi and somebody in Tokyo who all have wept, who've all longed and lost, who've all been happy. So the library helps you to see, not only that you are not alone, but that you're not really any different from everyone else."*

I have never been alone on this journey. Together we have sustained operations through unprecedented population growth and municipality expansions. Together we have weathered a pandemic and an earthquake. Together we grew circulation from a few million to become one of the highest circulating libraries in North America. Together we have improved and cultivated library services across the valley, successfully completing 11 new library construction projects. Together we have expanded our collections, undertaken numerous library renovations, and improved the lives of our residents by delivering robust programs and outreach services. We have helped build community, focused on early learning, connected with schools, provided service to jails and health clinics, served our unsheltered populations, and assisted with memory care.

Our library is deeply rooted in a tradition of service to all and is built for the future. Let us be guided by Dwight D. Eisenhower, who cautioned: *"Don't join the book burners. Don't think you're going to conceal faults by concealing evidence that they ever existed. Don't be afraid to go in your library and read every book..."*

Thank you Mayor Wilson, County Council members and the Library's Board of Directors for your guidance and leadership. You have helped the County Library be recognized as one of the great library systems in the nation for our responsive, innovative and creative approaches to library service. Please continue to support and sustain this precious resource for the benefit of all the citizens of Salt Lake County.

Although I am looking forward to retirement and spending more time with family and friends, I plan to remain engaged, volunteer in my community and will continue to advocate for the importance of libraries. Together, I am confident the Salt Lake County Library will continue to make a positive difference for our residents for many years to come!

Sincerely,



James D. Cooper, Director
Salt Lake County Library